

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 OCL-00 OPR-02 /071 W

----- 023883

R 050935Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3341

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCUSNAVEUR

COMNAVTELCOM

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0449

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, ET

SUBJECT: MAY DAY/EASTER WEEKEND IN ASMARA

REF: USDAO ETHIOPIA IR 68300240 (010730Z MAY 75)

1. NOTWITHSTANDING NUMEROUS PREDICTIONS OF RENEWED INSURGENT ACTIVITY IN ERITREA, AND PARTICULARLY IN ASMARA, TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH FOUR DAY MAY DAY/ETHIOPIAN EASTER HOLIDAY, WEEKEND PASSED WITHOUT UPSURGE IN FIGHTING IN ASMARA.

2. MAY DAY ITSELF, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, WAS CELEBRATED AS AN OFFICIAL HOLIDAY. IN ASMARA, THE OCCASION WAS MARKED BY FORCED APPEARANCE AT QUEEN OF SHEBA STADIUM OF SEVERAL THOUSAND WORKERS, GROUPED UNDER BANNERS AND SIGNS INDICATING THEIR EMPLOYERS. REPRESENTATIVES OF LABOR AND MANAGEMENT DELIVERED ADDRESSES. MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR BG GETACHEW NADEW FOLLOWED WITH USUAL
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ETHIOPIA TIKDEM SPEECH. SOME THOUSANDS OF SPECTATORS WERE PRESENT,

INCLUDING GOV'T OFFICIALS, LEADING INDUSTRIALISTS, CONSULAR CORPS, AND PROMINENT CITIZENS. CROWD WAS NOT NOTABLY ENTHUSIASTIC DURING HOUR-LONG CEREMONY. WORKERS MARCHED OUT OF STADIUM UNDER THEIR IDENTIFYING SIGNS. THEY WERE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE MARCH THROUGHOUT CITY, BUT THEY REPORTEDLY DISBANDED SOON AFTER LEAVING STADIUM. MAY DAY IN ASMARA WAS NOT A JOYOUS OCCASION.

3. EASTER WAS CELEBRATED IN TRADITIONAL MANNER HERE AS MOST SIGNIFICANT CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY. CURFEW LIFTED COMPLETELY ON SATURDAY NIGHT TO PERMIT TRADITIONAL MIDNIGHT CHURCH SERVICES. MANY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS ALTHOUGH FEWER THAN IN PAST. ETH. ARMY TROOPS TRUCKED IN FROM OUTLYING AREAS TO PARTICIPATE IN EASTER CELEBRATIONS. ON SUNDAY, LARGE NUMBERS OF QUARRELSOME DRUNKEN TROOPS EVIDENT IN TOWN. ODD BURSTS OF FIRE HEARD, DURING ONE OF WHICH ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, A BULLET WENT THROUGH GLASS DOOR AT KAGNEW CLUB BUT THERE WERE NO INJURIES. TODAY, MONDAY, ASMARA APPEARS NORMAL, THAT IS TO SAY, NORMALLY APREHENSIVE. SHERRY

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